

Los Angeles ranks among the least prepared for the upcoming switch - coming in just 23 days

Washington, DC - Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA) today encouraged residents, especially those in Los Angeles, to get ready for the national switch to digital television on June 12 so they can continue to receive important local television news, TV programs, and emergency information. Los Angeles ranks among the least prepared cities in the nation for the digital transition, according to the Department of Commerce.

"I know lots of people that still buy presents on Christmas Eve and mail in their taxes on April 15," said Rep. Linda Sánchez. "But the digital TV transition is an event that will need timely preparation. If you haven't already, I urge you to get your converter boxes or otherwise resolve any technical issues before the June 12 deadline so that you don't miss out on important news or your favorite show."

Many local broadcasters will be participating in coordinated DTV "soft tests" Thursday, May 21, 2009. These tests are designed to alert analog viewers who are unprepared for the impending transition that they will lose service once the transition occurs unless they act promptly to get ready. Instead of completely cutting off the analog signal, during the soft test, broadcasters will interrupt the regular programming of analog signals to warn viewers if they are not prepared for the transition.

Consumers need to begin preparing for this monumental change now, not only to enjoy the benefits of digital television, but to avoid losing their television service altogether. Families who receive their television signal over-the-air, using a traditional rooftop antenna or "rabbit ears" on older TVs will have to acquire a new "digital to analog" converter box to ensure that their television sets can display the new digital signals. Viewers who have newer, digital-ready TVs, or who receive their signal through cable, satellite, or broadband service will not require a new converter box.

The Department of Commerce has set up a program to help consumers defray the cost of converter boxes, which are expected to cost between \$50 and \$75. Every household is eligible for two \$40 coupons, each of which can be used toward the purchase of a converter box. Consumers can apply online and also go online to find a converter box retailer near you.

Consumers can call 1-888-DTV-2009 or visit <http://www.dtv2009.gov> to learn more.